



Council of Canadian Administrative Tribunals
Conseil des tribunaux administratifs canadiens



History

Informal beginnings

CCAT began informally, not as an organization, but with the desire to hold conferences for those interested in administrative law. Circa 1984, around the proverbial dining table of Michelle Farlardeau-Ramsay, then Chair of the Immigration and Refugee Board, a two-day conference was planned for federally regulated agencies and boards. It was held in the hearing rooms of the Public Service Staff Relations Board in order to save on costs and it was a great success. So planning began for the next conference, bigger this time. The location shifted to Queen's University in Kingston where the annual conferences were held for several years and then to Ottawa.

Some of these early conference planners came from the administrative justice community: Robert W. Macaulay, Michelle Farlardeau-Ramsay, Ron Ellis, Jean-François Gosselin, Ghislaine Richard, and Margo Priest. Planning was relatively informal and anyone interested could participate.

However, the participants recognized the need for some communication between conferences and they formed a committee to meet in the interim periods. Committee members came from the various administrative boards and agencies. Then similar meetings for executive directors of these boards and agencies started.

Incorporation

Out of the success and enthusiasm for these early conferences came the initiative in the mid-1980s to organize more formally as a corporation. CCAT was federally incorporated by Letters Patent issued on December 31, 1986. The applicants (and first directors) were Michael I. Jeffrey, Donald R. Yeomans, Jean-François Gosselin, Roger Labelle, and Ghislaine Richard. CCAT's mandate was to facilitate discussion and research in administrative law issues; and to continue holding conferences and meetings where training and networking could take place.

Continuing importance of conferences

Conferences remained key events and were (and continue to be) held annually. But the scope increased significantly in 1999 with CCAT's first international conference in Vancouver. The theme was "Regulating in a Global Economy" and the opening speaker was Dr. Lawrence Susskind, a world-renowned mediator and lecturer at Harvard University and MIT. A large number of the conference speakers were from foreign countries, and delegates attended from all regions of Canada and from across the world. Global exposure for CCAT was enhanced by a second international conference in 2001 in Quebec City, a third in Toronto in 2004, and the fourth in Vancouver in 2007. These are now a permanent feature of CCAT's conference planning.

Expanded scope of CCAT activities

CCAT's activities have expanded beyond conferences. The *Canadian Journal of Administrative Law and Practice*, a quarterly journal on administrative justice issues, began in 1987 and is published by Carswell in partnership with CCAT.

CCAT has also participated in developing formal training programs for members and staff of administrative tribunals. In addition, it has become a catalyst and serves as a model for the development of regional organizations such as the Society of Ontario Adjudicators and Regulators (SOAR), the BC Council of Administrative Tribunals (BCCAT), the Manitoba Council of Administrative Tribunals (MCAT), and the Alberta Foundation of Administrative Justice.

So what began as a good idea, over a good dinner, has now grown to become a dynamic organization beginning its third decade at the forefront of the Canadian administrative justice community. From that first two-day conference, CCAT now offers its members ongoing training and networking opportunities through annual conferences, training programs, its website, as well as other benefits.